

F.5  
.M36

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005120664









THE GOTHS IN NEW-ENGLAND.



715  
810

## DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

PHILOMATHESIAN SOCIETY

OF MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.

AUGUST 15, 1843.

BY GEORGE P. MARSH

“

— antiquam exquirite matrem.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY



MIDDLEBURY.

PRINTED BY J. COBB JR

1843



F5  
.M36

216523  
15

## DISCOURSE.

To a serious and thoughtful scholar, it is an enviable and responsible privilege to be permitted to discuss, on an occasion like the present, a theme of his own selection. For, were a speaker, who aims at the presentation of facts, and the development of principles, with reference to the practical duties that flow from them, allowed to select for himself his own 'fit audience,' he could scarcely hope to find a more appropriate circle of listeners, than that which the annual festival of a higher literary institution assembles. On the one hand are those, who are devoted to the acquisition and diffusion, or the practical application, of recondite knowledge, either learning simply that they may teach, or accumulating stores of facts and principles, to serve for argument, illustration, and guidance in the more elevated walks of public and professional life. These, accustomed to trace effects through their proximate to their ultimate causes, and habitually looking back from conclusion to premiss, may be supposed best able to apprehend and appreciate principles and their relations; and these, however unseen their influence, and however devious and obscure the channel through which it acts on the public mind, are the teachers, and by consequence the real rulers, of the nation. On the other hand are men, for the most part thinking and intelligent, but not highly educated, who have emerged from speculation into action, and whose participation in the hurrying and engrossing cares and burdens of social and material life has not only eman-

ripped them from the shackles of scholastic prejudice, but habituated them to a promptness of action, which in some degree excludes reflection, and disposes them rather to look forward from the existing cause to the future effect, and to judge from the apparent analogies of their personal experience, than to busy themselves in inquiring whether the more general laws, which have governed the past, have not yet sufficient vitality to control the future.

But speculative inquiry into the laws of matter or of mind, without reference to their connection with the duties of the present, and their influence on the fortunes of the future, is but an idle dilettantism; and calculation on the future, without recourse to the principles which observation of the past educes, is little better than a groping and conjectural empiricism. The man of action therefore ought to be brought to seek the sometimes dim, but always steady, light of principle; and the man of speculation to remember that the effects, which he has traced to their source, have now, in their turn, become efficient causes, and that the laws, which he has investigated, are more important in their relations to the boundless future, than to the narrow present or limited past.

To one actuated by the views which I have supposed, it is specially desirable to *speak* to his audience, rather than to address them through the medium of the press. For here, that of the poet,

What we *hear*  
With weaker passion will affect the heart,  
Than when the faithful *eye* beholds the part.

is reversed. The tongue and the ear are the appropriate active and passive organs of the spoken word, which is the only true living medium of communication between man and his fellow, as is the spiritual word between man and his Maker. Human language is composed of significant sounds, while visible characters and their combinations in written syllables and words are not language, but arbitrary and conventional symbols, by which language is recalled. Articulate sounds are immediately and directly



expressive and intelligible, but their conventional representatives require the intervention of a foreign interpreter, the eye, an organ properly conversant only with certain sensible qualities of material things; and therefore it is that men often listen with attentive interest to that which, if written only, would never boast a reader.

I think myself happy therefore in being invited to address an intelligent audience, on topics of philosophical interest and practical importance, by the fittest mode of communication, though abundantly conscious, that what I shall offer will fall far short both of the advantages of the occasion, and the magnitude and interest of the subject.

From one who speaks where there is none to reply, and who aims rather to provoke discussion, and to excite reflection, than to demonstrate absolute truth, or to rouse to immediate action, neither logical method nor impassioned eloquence is to be expected, and the speaker will be rather discursive, than argumentative or persuasive. But though the form of his discourse is not that best suited to the establishment of principles, it is well calculated to elicit them; and though he is not confined to rigorous argument, he is more likely to arrive at safe results than the disputant, who, from the nature of his position, is rather a defender of his thesis than a seeker after truth.

The most favourite theme of public discussion for the last four-score years, both in this country and in Europe, has been the absolute rights of man, and in these discussions, by the common mistake of confounding the means and the end, his relative rights and correlative duties have been unfortunately too generally overlooked. For rights are truly valuable only because the enjoyment of them is indispensable to the performance of the duties, which our relations to God and to man impose upon us. Nor does the establishment of the absolute rights of man upon their true basis require much discussion. For a perception of these rights is intuitive, or perhaps I should say rather, instinctive, because it is, even unconsciously, an universal ground and principle of human action. But, as instincts may be suppressed, or

even implanted, by external restraints or stimuli,\* so man's intuitive perception of his natural rights may be checked in its development, and prevented from ever arriving at distinct consciousness. Yet, though suppressed in the individual, it cannot be extirpated from the race, and though destructible in *men*, it is as immortal in *man*, as the selfish principle, with which it is inseparably connected. But our relative rights, or conversely our duties, are not too plain to require discussion, nor, apparently conflicting, as they often are, with the selfish principle, and flowing from obscure relations, can they be too frequently inculcated or too earnestly enforced.

Man's duties are first religious, including those to self, then domestic, then patriotic, then philanthropic. But when I say, that the duties of religion include those referring to self, I do by no means assent to that characteristic doctrine of the English religious philosophy of the eighteenth century, so fatal in religion, and so degrading and demoralizing in ethics, which solves all questions of duty by a calculation of the balance of profit and loss; nor do I recognise the self seeking principle as a ground or foundation of moral obligation at all. Nor by distinguishing duties into classes, do I mean to subordinate the one to the other, as inferior in point of obligation,—for I hold that under the harmonious scheme of christian morality, all conflict of duty is but apparent,—but I divide them upon grounds of convenience, because they are most appropriately considered in connection with the different relations from which they flow.

So far then as any human obligations are separable from our general duties to our Maker, the observations which I shall offer will bear upon our patriotic duties as American citizens, or in other words, my country is my subject, and especially that portion of it, whose sons are most honourably distinguished by true nobility of origin, uniformity and harmony of character, and independence of extraneous influence; and it is with reference to the danger of contamination from foreign contagion, that I shall aim to give my remarks a practical character.

\*Lyell's Principles of Geology, Book III, chap. 3.

Although the people of New England are not deficient in the just and honourable pride of descent from an eminently wise and virtuous ancestry, yet in the excitement of our rapid growth, progress, and development, there is danger, that we shall be too thoughtless of the past, to exercise an intelligent foresight in regard to the future. For it belongs to the character of youthful and vigorous nations, to concern themselves with the present and the future rather than with the past, and it is not until the sun of their greatness has passed its culminating point, and is beginning to decline in the west, that a spirit of antiquarian research is excited, or that they seriously occupy themselves in philosophical investigations concerning the causes and means of their elevation. It is chiefly for this reason, that the early history of governments, even of recent origin and modern organization, is often involved in hopeless obscurity, and the preservation of the records, the memorials, or even the traditional memory of important events, does not become an object of solicitude until time has forever obliterated them.

Our onward spirit of advancement is, I fear, accompanied with too much thoughtless indifference, in relation to the events of our national infancy. We are too apt to consider our national history as commencing with that Revolution, which did but legally separate countries already both disjoined and alienated, to confound individuality with independence, and to forget that we were a nation a century before we became an empire. In the well merited tribute of our admiration to those patriot warriors and statesmen, by whose genius and whose labours in the field and the cabinet, the energies of our fathers were guided to the achievement of acknowledged independence, we overlook the higher reverence we owe to that earlier generation of pioneers in the forest, and wise and pious doctors in the church, who planted and watered the germ of our free institutions, and laid broad and deep the foundations of that superstructure, which with sometimes incongruous architecture, we are now erecting. The frame of our government was the work of the Revolution; its principles the results of the teachings of a preceding age.

But we must remember, that what our forefathers did for us we are doing for our children, and that the character of their institutions will depend much on the shape into which we shall mould our own. It is an ancient maxim, that individual power is to be maintained by the same means by which it was originally acquired. The same doctrine is no doubt in general true, when applied to national greatness; and if therefore we would transmit unimpaired to those who are to come after us the inheritance which we have received from those who are gone before, we must watch over and protect the integrity of our national institutions, in the same spirit which actuated their original framers.

But national institutions, where not forcibly imposed by usurpation or conquest, or dictated by foreign influence, are the growth and product of national character, and the vigilant and sedulous cultivation of the moral features, and the observance of the principles, which constitute the primitive Novanglian type, are therefore the indispensable means of preserving those institutions, which have been more successful in accomplishing the true ends of society and of human government, in the formation of a wise, virtuous, and prosperous people, than any other system of social order, which has been hitherto devised. In that type will be found all the elements involved in the ideal of the perfect citizen, and the law of a state, of a political society containing within itself a principle of progressive development, and a *vis medicatrix*, dimly anticipated by the half-christian Plato, and impliedly revealed by christianity, was first and most perfectly realized by the communities of New England.

Let me here be allowed to note, by way of digression, two singular facts, which the diligent student of our history will discover, and which do not appear to have attracted so much notice as their importance deserves. The first is, that the spirit of antagonism to English principles in law, government and religion, was more strongly pronounced, while we were in a state of colonial subjection, than it has been since the Revolution emancipated us from the British yoke. The other is, that in the fluctuations

of public opinion in this country and in Europe upon the great principles of political and religious liberty, the contemporaneous currents have often run counter, on the opposite sides of the Atlantic, and we have thus been preserved from those entangling alliances, in which a too close communion with the political systems of the old world would have involved us. Those periods, in which we have most strongly tended to consolidation and despotism, have been precisely the eras of republican and democratic tendencies in Europe, and, when we have verged to the contrary extreme, public opinion on the continent and in England has been favourable to less popular forms of government. The former of these apparent anomalies is to be referred to the hostility of feeling generated by the oppressive treatment of the colonies by the mother country; and though the influence of England in politics, literature, philosophy and religion, has exercised and still exercises a most baneful sway over the American mind, it is still an honour to have yielded to conviction what we refused to arbitrary power. The other fact adverted to I ascribe to the influence reciprocally exerted by Europe and America upon each other. The impulse given upon one side of the ocean is felt upon the other; but time is required for the production of this effect, and the force is usually exhausted in its source, before it arrives at its acme at the opposite pole of its influence, and the action of the two continents upon each other may be illustrated by that of a lever, whose ends are moved in contrary directions by one force.

To those who have studied the early history of New England in its sources, in that spirit of charitable and intelligent sympathy, which is a necessary condition for the profitable study of all history—for we can understand nothing human in which we do not sympathize,—my estimate of the moral and intellectual character of her people will not seem extravagant; but I do not expect the assent of those who look for instruction to strangers in blood and in religion, or who, too indolent to seek truth at the fountain, are deceived by that shallow querulousness, into which our native historical writers sometimes fall, either because whole-



safe blame is cheaper than discriminating praise, or because, having themselves relapsed into the superstitions, which their wiser ancestors had shaken off, they seek to apologize for their own apostasy, by decrying the character, and exaggerating the errors, of their fathers.

The intellectual character of our Puritan forefathers is that derived by inheritance from our remote Gothic ancestry, restored by its own inherent elasticity to its primitive proportions, upon the removal of the shackles and burdens, which the spiritual and intellectual tyranny of Rome had for centuries imposed upon it; but its moral traits are a superinduction of the temper and spirituality of Christianity upon the soul of the Goth, under conditions best suited to purify the heart, and steel to the utmost the energies of the spirit.

The emigration of the first settlers of New England, contemplated in its causes, its circumstances, and its results, is the noblest and most touching incident in all history. Antiquity furnished neither motive nor occasion for such a display of the most generous and heroic qualities of humanity; and it was reserved for Christianity to suggest the motive, and for the atrocious tyranny of the bigoted Stuarts to supply the occasion, for that rare union of Christian endurance, self sacrificing devotion, and chivalrous energy, which will embalm the memory of the Pilgrims while men shall venerate the constancy of the martyr, and admire the courage of the hero.

The character of the Pilgrims, though the appropriate heritage of those in whose veins their blood continues to flow, is the common property, and in the eyes of all truthful and generous spirits of whatever nation or creed, the common glory of the race from which they sprang; and while we condemn the malice, which would destroy our reverence for the memory of our fathers, in order the more easily to seduce us into apostasy from their principles, we cannot but pity that narrowness of sectarian bigotry, or national prejudice, which, for the sake of palliating the crimes of those who drove them into exile, or of inflicting a wound upon those who have inherited their principles and their faith, would,



in tarnishing the fair fame of the Pilgrims, deprive humanity of its highest honours.

That the mind of New England is plainly distinguishable from that of the mother country, is due partly to the circumstances under which the colonies were planted, and the subsequent political disturbances in England, which both promoted the emigration of new colonists of like spirit with their predecessors, and protected the infant community from the interference of the Stuarts; but chiefly to the fact, that our forefathers belonged to that grand era in British history, when the English mind, under the impulse of the Reformation, was striving to recover its Gothic tendencies, by the elimination of the Roman element, and giving a new proof of that consanguinity with Greece, which the demonstrable affinity of the ancient English tongue with the language of the Greeks so clearly indicates.\*

The period to which I refer embraces the century extending from the accession of Elizabeth to the restoration of despotism, and the overthrow of British freedom, under the reign of Charles II; and is distinguished by the pregnant fact, that to it belong not only the greatest names in the list of England's worthies, but almost every name, which sustains her claim to intellectual supremacy, and still more conspicuously, by the discussion of the principles of civil and religious liberty, which resulted in their temporary establishment by the sword of Cromwell, and their defence and illustration by the pen of Freedom's mightiest apostle, John Milton.

In this age flourished Bacon, Raleigh, the two Sidneys, Spencer, Shakspeare, Ben Johnson, Coke, Hampden, Hooker, Leighton, Howe, Baxter, Cudworth, Vane, Milton, Cromwell, Dryden, Newton and Hale, the loftiest geniuses in literature, the profoundest speculators in philosophy, the most pious, learned and eloquent divines, the most devoted patriots, the wisest statesmen, and the greatest sages in the law, to whom the soil of England has given birth.

\*See the argument of Rask, in his *Undersogelse om det gamle Nordiske Sprog Oprindelse*, which is, in the main, equally applicable to the Anglo-Saxon.

In this age Cromwell, uniting in himself man's two highest vocations, as the dispenser of God's mercies, and the minister of his judgments, exhibited to Europe the proudest spectacle which the world had witnessed — a tyrant at the bar of an offended people, — and by a series of measures stamped by the profoundest wisdom and the most prophetic foresight, raised England from the rank of a secondary power to a level with the proudest, and laid the foundations of that maritime and commercial greatness, which has enabled her to encircle the globe with an almost unbroken chain of conquests.\*

In this age, the true principles of the freedom of the citizen, the liberty of conscience, and the liberty of the press were proclaimed with more than Demosthenian eloquence, by the immortal Milton, in a series of treatises, which constitute the crowning triumph of his exalted genius, and exhibit far more of the unrivalled splendor of his intellect than even his divine epic. And I trust I shall be pardoned, if I here pause to pay my homage to the lofty spirit displayed in that marvellous preface to the second book of his *Treatise on Church Government*, where, in such burning words as were never else vouchsafed to mortal pen, inspiring the deepest awe in all who reverence the divinity in his image, he gives utterance to the very voice of conscience, as it spake to his inner man, overawing his will, and irresistibly impelling him, for the sake of proclaiming to his countrymen and to Europe the truth of God, to forsake for a time those flowery paths in which he most delighted to rove, and to forego those studies, in which he shames not, with a noble self-confidence, to declare that he felt himself able to achieve immortality, or in his own words, “by labour and intense study joined with the strong propensity of nature, to leave something so written to after-times, as they should not willingly let it die.”

\*It has been determined, as we learn by recent arrivals, that Cromwell shall occupy no place among the effigies of the British sovereigns, by which the new Parliament-House is to be decorated; and Romanizing England, may now share with Romanized Bavaria the infamy of the two meanest acts since the imprisonment of Napoleon, the exclusion namely of the bust of Luther from the Walhalla, and of that of Cromwell from the British capitol.

To this age, in fine, as if to exemplify the tendency of extremes to meet, belongs the greater part of that series of acts of legislative intolerance, which are now generally designated, after the title of one of the most obnoxious of them passed under the reign of Charles II, the Acts of Uniformity. For atrocity, these acts stand unparalleled in the history of legislation in representative governments, and are indeed a fit pendant to that system of criminal law, which visited with the punishment of death the theft of a shilling, or the defacing of the image and superscription of majesty on a penny, but imposed, and to this hour imposes, no penalty on the violation of the most sacred of domestic rights.

But by the interposition of that Providence, which knows how to bring good out of evil, the persecutions authorized by these acts were made instrumental in winnowing the wheat from the chaff, and in laying the foundation of a new republic, destined, we trust, long to remain as a model of a system of human government based on those doctrines of civil and religious liberty, which, involving the absolute separation and mutual independence of church and state, denying the sanction of law to ecclesiastical authority, and declaring that the people are the immediate source of political power, are the only principles on which man can reconcile obedience to his ruler with duty to his God.

The restoration of the Stuarts having accomplished the total overthrow of British liberty, the mind of England, exhausted by the struggle of a hundred years, slept; and it is but now, that she is rousing from the slumber of two centuries, and preparing to renew the conflict, which will probably end only in securing to every citizen the enjoyment of equal legal rights, or in the complete establishment of religious intolerance, and spiritual and temporal despotism. The approaching contest, though different in aspect, is in substance the same conflict of principles, which rendered the civil dissensions of the seventeenth century so memorable. In politics, it is a strife between the aristocracy and the people; in spiritual and intellectual things, it is a struggle between the discordant elements of the English character.

The mind of England, as I have already hinted, is, like her

language, composed of two hostile elements, the Gothic and the Roman, the former predominating in the foundation, the latter in the superstructure.

I shall do my audience the justice to suppose, that they are too well instructed to be the slaves of that antiquated and vulgar prejudice, which makes Gothicism and barbarism synonymous. The Goths, the common ancestors of the inhabitants of North Western Europe, are the noblest branch of the Caucasian race. We are their children. It was the spirit of the Goth, that guided the May-Flower across the trackless ocean; the blood of the Goth, that flowed at Bunker's Hill.

Nor were the Goths the savage and destructive devastators, that popular error has made them. They indeed overthrew the dominion of Rome but they renovated her people; they prostrated her corrupt government, but they respected her monuments; and Theodoric the Goth not only spared but protected many a precious memorial, which Italian rapacity and monkish superstition have since annihilated. The old lamentation, *Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecere Barberini*, contains a world of truth, and had not Rome's own sons been her spoilers, she might have shone at this day in all the splendour of her Augustan age.

England is Gothic by birth, Roman by adoption. Whatever she has of true moral grandeur, of higher intellectual power, she owes to the Gothic mother; while her grasping ambition, her material energies, her spirit of exclusive selfishness, are due to the Roman nurse.

The Goth is characterized by the reason, the Roman, by the understanding; the one by imagination, the other by fancy; the former aspires to the spiritual, the latter is prone to the sensuous. The Gothic spirit produced a Bacon, a Shakspeare, a Milton; the Roman, an Arkwright, a Brindley, and a Locke. It was a Roman, that gathered up the coals on which St. Lawrence had been broiled; a Goth, who, when a fellow disciple of the great Swiss reformer had rescued his master's heart from the enemy, on the field where the martyr fell, snatched that heart from its preserver, and hurled it, yet almost palpitating with life,

into the waters of a torrent, lest some new superstition should spring from the relics of Zwingli.

Rome, it is said, thrice conquered the world; by her arms, by her literature and art, by her religion. But Rome was essentially a nation of robbers. Her territory was acquired by unjust violence. She plundered Greece of the choicest productions of the pencil and the chisel, and her own best literature and highest art are but imperfect copies of the master-pieces of the creative genius of the Greek. She not only sacked the temples, but removed to the imperial city the altars, and adopted the Gods, of the nations she conquered. Tiberius even prepared a niche for the Christian Saviour among the heathen idols in the Pantheon, and when Constantine made Christianity the religion of the state, he sanctioned the corruptions which Rome had engrafted upon it, and handed it down to his successors, contaminated with the accumulated superstitions of the whole heathen world.

The Goth has thrice broken her sceptre. The Goth dispelled the charm that made her arms invincible. The Goth overthrew her idolatrous altar, and the Goth is now surpassing her proudest works in literature and in art.

The cardinal distinction between these conflicting elements, as exemplified in literature and art, government, and religion, may be thus stated. The Roman mistakes the means for the end, and subordinates the principle to the form. The Goth, valuing the means only as they contribute to the advancement of the end, looks beneath the form, and seeks the in-dwelling, life-giving principle, of which he holds the form to be but the outward expression. With the Goth, the idea of life is involved in the conception of truth, and though he recognizes life as an immutable principle, yet he perceives that its forms of expression, of action, of suffering, are infinitely diversified, agreeing however in this, that all its manifestations are characterized by development, motion, progress. To him truth is symbolized by the phenomena of organic life. The living plant or animal, that has ceased to grow, has already begun to die. Living truth, therefore, though immutable in essence, he regards as active, progressive in its manifes-



tations ; and he rejects truths, which have lost their vitality, forms divorced from their spirituality, symbols, which have ceased to be expressive. With the Goth, all truth is an ever-living principle, whence should spring the outward expression, fluctuating, varying, according to the circumstances which call it forth ; with the Roman, its organic life is petrified, frozen into inflexible forms, inert. To the one it is a perennial fountain, a living stream, which murmurs, and flows, and winds ‘at its own sweet will,’ refreshing all life within the sphere of its influence, and perpetually receiving new accessions from springs that are fed by the showers of heaven, as it hastens onward to that unfathomable ocean of divine knowledge, which is both its primeval source and its ultimate limit. To the other, it is a current congealed to ice by the rigour of winter, chilling alike the landscape and the spectator, or a pool, that stagnates, putrefies, and breeds its countless swarms of winged errors.

In literature and art, the Goth pursues the development of a principle, the expression of a thought, the realization of an ideal ; the Roman seeks to fix the attention, and excite the admiration, of the critic or the spectator, by the material and sensuous beauties of his work.

Thus in poetry, the Roman aims at smoothness of versification, harmonious selection and arrangement of words, and brilliancy of imagery ; the Goth strives to give utterance to ‘thoughts that breathe, in words that burn.’

In plastic and pictorial art, the Roman attracts the spectator by the grace and voluptuous beauty of the external form, the harmony of colouring, the fitness and proportion of the accessories, the excellence of keeping ; the Goth regards these but as auxiliaries, and subordinates or even sacrifices them all to the expression of the thought or passion, which dictates the action represented.

The Goth holds that government springs from the people, is instituted for their behoof, and is limited to the particular objects for which it was originally established ; that the legislature is but an organ for the solemn expression of the deliberate will of the



nation, that the coercive power of the executive extends only to the enforcement of that will, and that penal sanctions are incurred only by resistance to it as expressed by the proper organ. The Roman views government as an institution imposed from without, and independent of the people, that it is its vocation not to express but to control the will; and hence, by a ready corruption, government comes to be considered as established for the private advantage of the ruler, who asserts not only a proprietary right to the emoluments of office, but an ultimate title to all the possessions, both of the state and of the individual citizen.

To the same source may be referred the poor fiction of divine indefeasible right, and that other degrading doctrine, which supposes all the power of government, legislative, judicial and executive, to have been originally lodged in the throne, allowing to the subject such political rights only, as have been conceded to him by the sovereign; and hence too that falsest and most baneful of errors, the incubus of the British constitution, which consolidates or rather confounds church and state, conceding to the civil ruler supreme authority in spiritual matters, and ascribing temporal power to religious functionaries and ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

So in spiritual things we find a like antagonism.

The Roman, holding the essence and efficacy of Christianity to consist in its ceremonies and its symbols, sinks the preacher in the priest, makes the minister a juggler, and conceives of Christianity as a middle term, a *punctum indifferens* between Judaism and idolatry, or a synthesis of the two, partaking equally of each; the Goth feels it to be a living spiritual influence, involving the abnegation of both, and believes that all its outward rites are symbolical of that internal work, by which the intellect is elevated, and the heart purified.

The one contemplates Christianity, not in its spirit and its influences on individual or national character, but in its external form as a church, and loves it for its dead, though splendid and imposing rites; the other regards it as a living and life-giving

spirit, a mode of inter-communion between man and his maker, depending for its exercise neither upon ritual nor priest.

The doctrines of the one are matters of opinion; those of the other, of belief; the one assenting and conforming, because it is written; the other embracing, because the witness from within, coinciding with the evidence from without, assures him, with the certainty of demonstration, that God's word is very truth.

The one, not perceiving that the catholicity of Christianity lies, not in its oneness of external form, but in its living organic power of adaptation, whereby Christian life, the highest expression of individual character, and devotion, the external expression of religious feeling, must, like all manifestations of life, be diversified in form, would enforce all men to the observance of one prescribed ritual, and to obedience to one arbitrarily imposed form of ecclesiastical polity; the other holds spiritual freedom to be of the essence of Christianity, and knowing, that wherever freedom exists, there will be discussion, diversity, division, he ventures not to brand difference in forms of worship, of church-government, or even of creeds, with the opprobrious name of schism.

The traits, which I have attempted to describe, are found in different proportions, and more or less intimately combined, or modified by other ingredients, in the characters of all the nations of Southern and of Western Europe. In most countries, one of these conflicting elements decidedly preponderates, and stamps the national mind with its own characteristic peculiarities; and there are numerous instances, as in most of the German States, where the spirit and principles of the government are diametrically opposed to those of the people. In England, they subsist in alternate or divided preponderance, but never co-exist in harmonious combination. It is to the present general ascendancy of the Roman element, that most of the defects of the English character of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are to be ascribed; and the sensuous philosophy of Locke, and its wretched corollary, the selfish morality of Paley, are rather the exponents, than the causes, of the leading tendencies of English mind.

The founders of the first New England colony, and their brethren, who followed them to their new home in the course of the same century, belonged to the class most deeply tinctured with the moral and intellectual traits of their Northern ancestry. They emigrated at a period, when the Roman tendency was strongly developed in the ruling party in the mother country, fostered by the foolish James, who never heartily embraced any of the doctrines of the English reformers, except that which flattered his vanity and love of arbitrary power by ascribing spiritual supremacy to the throne, and by the feeble Charles, the tyrant of his people, the slave of the prelacy, and the tool of his favourites, who, from mistaken sympathy, and from ignorance of his true character and purposes, is now revered as a martyr, and destined perhaps, when England shall become more thoroughly Romanized, to be venerated as a saint.

The local separation of the colonies from England preserved their people from the re-action, which followed the accession of the polluted Charles II, and before the close of that disgraceful reign, they had acquired sufficient physical strength, and sufficient unity and independence of character, to be able to protect themselves, in a great measure, from the encroachments of the royal prerogative, and the abuses of parliamentary tyranny.

At an early period, they freed themselves from the last remnant and most offensive peculiarity of the Roman spirit, religious intolerance, and were the first communities, that recognized in spiritual as well as temporal things that principle of the absolute legal equality of all men, which is implied in the first great law of Christianity, and without the practical acknowledgment of which, no state can rightfully claim to be established on a Christian basis.

The religious intolerance of the Pilgrims has been made the subject of the most unmeasured obloquy, and the grossest exaggeration. I shall not deny, that they, for a brief period, shared in the common error of that age; but something must be allowed to that human weakness, which is unable, at a single bound, to free itself from the mental bondage of a thousand years, and to

that frailty, which yielded to the temptation to retaliate upon their oppressors, who followed them in their exile, the persecutions which they had suffered at home.

But those apologists for the Anglican hierarchy, who inexorably condemn the Pilgrims, should remember that the error, which they discarded as soon as its inconsistency with the fundamental principles of their faith and polity was felt, is still inherent in the British constitution ; that though religious opinion is, for the time, free in England, yet a large proportion of the people of the nation are not only excluded from all participation in the vast funds, which the charity of former ages accumulated for pious uses, but are by law compelled to contribute to the support of the religion of the state ; and, that while the supremacy of the civil government in ecclesiastical matters subsists, the Englishman has no security against the re-enactment of those intolerant laws,\* and the renewal of those persecutions, which damned to

\*It may not be amiss to specify some of the awful crimes against God and man perpetrated by the English hierarchy, through the civil government, during the reign of Charles II, in the revival of obsolete, and the enactment of new statutes of intolerance.

By one act, all officers of the crown were required to profess upon oath a belief in the King's rightful ecclesiastical supremacy, and to be actual communicants of the established church ; by another, the appointment of any but such communicants to the humblest offices in municipal corporations was forbidden ; by the conventicle act, attendance upon divine worship, where any other forms should be followed than those of the ritual prescribed by act of parliament, was prohibited upon pain of fine and imprisonment, and, upon repetition of the **CRIME**, of **DEATH**, and to those accused of the offence, a trial by jury was denied, the simple record of a justice of the peace being a sufficient warrant for the infliction of the penalty. No less than eight thousand British subjects are said to have died in prison, or upon the scaffold, for violating this law. The notorious Act of Uniformity, passed in 1662, required every clergyman in England to make oath and subscription to his belief of all things contained in the book of common prayer newly ordained by act of parliament, and that, before the book was published and put in circulation ; so that not above one tenth of the clergy knew the contents of the book, to the truth of which they were required to make oath. By a fit, and probably intentional, coincidence, this act was ordered to take effect on St. Bartholomews feast, and on that day two thousand of the wisest and holiest ministers of the church of England resigned their livings, in preference to submitting to a decree as wicked as that which consigned thirty thousand French protestants to slaughter, on the same anniver-

everlasting infamy the reign of the foul usurper Charles II, and in their direct consequences, and lasting moral influence, brought upon the church and people of England a heavier curse than the visible judgments of fire and pestilence, that so signally witnessed the displeasure of Heaven.

But the mistake of the Pilgrims was, after all, rather an error in fact than in principle. They knew not their own high vocation; they considered themselves, not as the founders of an empire, but merely as a private society, established for a specific purpose—the worship of God namely, in the humble simplicity of the Gospel—and rightfully entitled by charter and by occupancy to the possession of certain territorial limits, from which they might lawfully exclude those, whose irreconcilable differences of religious principle interfered with the grand object for which their community was established; in short as a church, having the right, which all churches claim and exercise, of prescribing the terms of admission to their own body. But, as I have said, the error was of transient continuance, and it should be remembered, to the honour of the Pilgrims, that all men enjoyed liberty of conscience in the colony of Plymouth, at a period when conformity was enforced by the sword and the scaffold, in England and Scotland.

The Novanglian character, as I have before observed, is most strongly marked by the intellectual peculiarities of that great race from which, with little intermixture, we are lineally descended; and

ry, ninety years before. And finally, another act forbade the silenced dissenting ministers to come within five miles of any city or borough sending members to parliament, lest the faithful subjects of the pious Charles II should be contaminated, by breathing the same air with such men as John Howe and Richard Baxter.

If to the victims of these nefarious laws we add the barbarous persecutions of the elder Leighton, Baxter, and hundreds of the wisest and most pious of English divines, instigated by Laud, whose insane malice was only equalled by his idiotical folly, Sheldon, Parker, Morley, the apostate Sharp, and other Bishops, we shall find a burden of guilt resting upon the shoulders of the prelacy of the Stuart dynasty, which must forever render them the abhorrence of all men, in whose breasts sectarian bigotry has not extinguished every spark of rational humanity. See Neal's *History of the Puritans*, a book which cannot be too highly recommended, to those who desire to study the history of the progress of religious liberty.



from causes more or less similar, the same traits will be found to characterize, in different degrees, the whole American people. In pointing out the fundamental distinctions between the primitive and the adscititious elements of English character, I have incidentally alluded to some of their exemplifications. I shall now advert to some of the less obvious results of the influence of the Roman spirit on the mind of England, with the view of shewing, that in these respects also, there is the same characteristic difference between the mother country and our own.

I ascribe then to the predominance of the Roman element, which sees things only in their outward and more imposing forms, the want of the historic sense in the British people. By those who have been taught to look for philosophy and truth in the pages of Hume, the contemner of popular rights, and the prejudiced apologist of the weak and profligate Stuarts, in the flowing narratives of the elegant but superficial Robertson, in the half-learned Hallam's rancorous hatred of the great Reformers, and his dishonest perversions of the spirit of their writings, in the flippant coxcombrty of the shallow and inflated Brougham, or in the tales of the weak, false, and malignant Alison, it will be deemed a heresy to deny that the literature of Britain has been inspired by the muse of history. But who, among British historical writers, belongs to that class of philosophical investigators, who see phenomena in their causes, who seek in history a picture of the life and soul of man, rather than of the movements of masses? You find but the external history of England, in those of her writers who have treated the subject *ex professo*. You learn how England, France, Spain and Holland influenced the policy of each other, by action and re-action, but not how English men acted upon England. Her historians regard nations as homogeneous, unconscious masses, subject like inorganic matter to certain natural laws, and moved only by impulses from without, and not as impersonations of the spirit of the individuals that compose them, acting in obedience to an internal law of organic and spiritual life. English history, therefore, is but the story of her foreign relations. You are told what wars she has waged, what conquests



she has achieved, what treaties she has negotiated; but if you would know what the English man was, at any given period, you must glean your knowledge from scraps and fragments, from repositories of documents inaccessible to ordinary students, or trust, for your pictures of life, to the uncertain page of the historical novelist.

Byron found in Mitford the qualities which he required in a historian, learning, labour, wrath, research, and partiality; and this strange list comprises the qualities and qualifications, which make up the popular English ideal of one, who acts as the priest of 'philosophy teaching by example.' We find abundant exemplifications of the labour, the wrath, and the partiality in British historians, but the learning and the research are of rarer occurrence; and in the long list of England's historical writers, we can award the praise of the higher intellectual powers and philosophical views which belong to his profession to but one — the infidel Gibbon — and in him we look in vain for that one quality, without which all others are worse than useless, the impartial love of truth.

To the same cause I ascribe the general inferiority of the English, in both the theory and the practice of the arts of design. The wealth of England has accumulated a large proportion of the noblest productions of ancient and modern art. Greece, Italy, Spain, Holland and Germany have been despoiled of many of their choicest treasures, to adorn the public galleries, or the private cabinets of the nobility. The marbles of Phidias, the beautiful vases of the old Greek and Etruscan potters, the canvasses of Raphael, of Claude, of Correggio, of Murillo, of Durer and of Rembrandt, have been transferred to the banks of the Thames, and the affluence of the aristocracy enables them to bestow a munificent patronage on native genius. The opportunities of cultivating the taste by the study of the finest models abound in that country, and her proximity to the continent, and the cheapness of living in Italy, France, and Germany, make readily accessible to her artists the galleries of Rome, Florence, Paris and Dresden. Here then are the means, and incentives to the at-

tainment of the highest excellence. Yet England has given birth to but one great original artist—the caricaturist Hogarth. The literature of art too in the English language is, if not a blank, a blot; and England has produced few well written and well reasoned treatises on the practice of art; upon its theory, scarcely one.

It is the incapacity to apprehend and seize in the outward forms of nature the law by which she works, the model or normal form to which she tends, or in other words to conceive and realize the ideal, that this deficiency is to be attributed.

For this is the true theory of the ideal in formative art. Certain forms and proportions of the organs, certain relations of the outline to the internal mechanism, constitute the type which combines the greatest amount, in kind and degree, of physical perfections and sensuous beauty. Again, form may be conceived of simply as the medium of expression; and certain forms of human, brute, and even vegetable life, are best suited to the expression of particular passions and emotions. Among the possible forms, of equal sensuous beauty or physical perfection, therefore, there is a difference in adaptedness to express given traits of individual character, or the feeling belonging to a particular action; and nature has the same variety of outward expression, that she has of internal life. Nature, provided with the material and the vital stimulus, working according to her immutable laws, under conditions most favourable to her free action, would produce certain invariable forms, combining in just proportion and accurate balance the physical perfections and the sensuous beauty, which characterize the type we spoke of, and in reality she approaches that type, just in proportion to the freedom with which she works. But as nature is conditioned by outward circumstances, and, from the earliest commencement to the full development of organic life, is never free from disturbing causes, she is more or less controlled or thwarted in her operations, and all forms actually realized are accordingly more or less abnormal.

The soul too co-works with her creator in building up her tenement of clay, and strives to impress on the external lineaments

the characteristics of her own peculiar tendencies; and thus forms become not only abnormal, but unequal in power and character of expression. Now the gifted sculptor or painter, by long study of nature's most perfect works, acquires an inner sense, or rather develops an inner faculty, whereby he pictures to himself those normal forms, to the realization of which productive nature tends, whether it be the model of particular expression, or the canon or balanced type of general perfection, which requires for its fit representation both an action and an attitude of unimpassioned repose, and in which particular expression exists potentially only; and in proportion as he succeeds in bodying forth and rendering sensible his ideal image, does he succeed in his work. The true artist then does not copy nature, as she is seen with the bodily eye, nor does he compose his forms of disjointed fragments of her actual works, but by an appropriation of her laws, and an exercise of the higher imagination, he triumphs over her, by realizing the ideal at which she aims, and, in strict propriety of speech, *creates* forms endued with a beauty, and clothed with a force of expression, which actual nature vainly strives to produce.

This is 'the vision and the faculty divine,' that revealed to the transcendent genius of the lamented Allston those more than speaking forms of dignity and grace, that peopled the canvass at the touch of his master hand. It is by this, that the Northern Thorvaldsen has outstripped all modern sculptors, and taken his stand by the side of Phidias, Praxiteles, and Lysippus; by this, that a kindred genius, a son of our own mountains,\* has extorted from jealous Europe the praise of the highest excellence in his difficult art; by this, that the American Greenough saw in the shapeless block the ennobled form of our Washington.

The artists of America then have given abundant evidence of the possession of that creative power, which is confessedly the highest expression of genius; nor need our youthful literature shrink from a comparison with that of any modern nation, in that

\*I trust there is not one of my fellow citizens, whose bosom does not dilate with conscious pride, in claiming HIRAM POWERS as a native Vermonter.

other field of intellectual effort to which we have before alluded, while we can boast such writers as the learned, laborious, and judicious historian of Ferdinand and Isabella, or the elegant, impartial, and philosophic Bancroft, happier at least in theme, if not in character as a historical writer.

If we have achieved such triumphs in the very morning of our national existence, before our forests are yet felled, or our morasses drained, when we have neither public galleries nor private cabinets for the display of paintings and sculpture, and the formation of artistic taste, and when our public libraries are few in number, and inferior in extent to the private collections of many European literati, we may reasonably hope, that when our material facilities for advancement in knowledge and in taste shall be raised more nearly to the level of those of the more favoured of European countries, the works of our authors and our artists will rival the proudest labours, of 'highest hope and hardest attempting' in literature and in art, which ancient or modern times have produced.

Another trait in the English character, resulting from a proneness to rest in the outward form, is the propensity to pay a servile and fawning reverence to the members of the hereditary aristocracy, and to yield to them a weight of influence far beyond their constitutional authority. Rank is admired and coveted, not so much for its legal powers and privileges as for its external show, or in other words, because it makes the man seem to be what he is not; and artificial rank has, in the English mind, superseded the notion of personal and even of official dignity. Rank indeed is in some rare instances the reward of genius or of virtue, but as the vast majority of its possessors can lay claim to neither, it comes to be considered as independent of both, and the establishment of a hereditary aristocracy is a voluntary sacrifice of a strong if not a lofty incentive to the attainment of high excellence, because it monopolizes the dignity which ought to be the reward of eminent public service. Artificial rank is sought too, not only for its present advantages, but because it is a cheap mode of attaining to that perpetuity of existence, to which, in all

its forms, whether material or spiritual, men universally, and often unconsciously, aspire. The ribbon will be remembered when the man is forgotten ; the star, when he that bore it is buried in oblivion ; the title, when the personality has forever vanished.

In those governments, on the other hand, where dignity and office are in the gift of the people, notwithstanding the frequent cases where political elevation is the fruit of secret intrigue, debasing compliance with popular prejudice, or the other arts of the demagogue, yet in the main, the possession of official rank does imply in the incumbent the existence of talents or virtues, which elevate him above the common level of his fellow men ; and in general, it is a fair and just presumption, that his official station is a tribute to his superiority as a man. In the public mind therefore, the dignity of office is inseparably connected with the moral or intellectual excellence which it supposes ; and the officer is revered for his worth, not the man for his office.

To instance in our own country ; what associations are called up by the names of Clay, of Webster, or of Calhoun ?—For I will refer only to those not now invested with official rank—Do we remember the posts they have filled ? Do we count the steps of their promotion from humble offices of narrow local jurisdiction, through the state and national legislature, to the cabinet ? Or do we not rather dwell upon the eloquence, the wisdom, and the virtues, which were the causes of their elevation, and which demand for them in private life the same reverence that we paid them, when they controlled the destinies of their country ?

The longing for outward distinction to which I have alluded, though unhappily far too common among ourselves, is yet eminently characteristic of the English character. The plain yeoman or artizan aspires to write himself gentleman, the gentleman to be addressed as Sir Thomas or Sir John, the knight or baronet to be saluted as my lord, and my lord again cherishes the hope of taking precedence as his grace. Thus life is spent in the chase after idle and arbitrary distinctions ; and heroism, wisdom, and virtue, ceasing to be ends, and becoming mere means, degenerate into brute courage, deceitful cunning, and the hollow show of seeming



morality. English biography is full of lamentable proofs of the debasing influence of this lust of rank on the noblest spirits, and even the genius of Scott was fired by no loftier aim, than the low ambition of being the founder of a race of Scotch lairds.

From the same source flows the family pride of England, or the low vanity of consanguinity or alliance with one ennobled probably not for the possession, but for the want, of all the qualities that lend dignity to humanity, — a feeling not only diverse from, but opposed to that honourable pride of birth, which elevates us with the conscious sympathy of spirit, that assures us of our legitimate descent from an ancestry distinguished for virtue, wisdom, genius, or valour.

Intimately connected with a hereditary aristocracy is a practical abuse, which may deserve a passing notice. I refer to the principle of primogeniture in the descent of title and estate. Rank, when coupled with office, must necessarily be limited to a particular individual in hereditary descent. But external display is of the essence of the English notion of dignity, and therefore the estate must descend with the rank, lest the dignity of the title should be disgraced for want of the wealth, which alone can invest it with the requisite splendour.

The law of primogeniture is objectionable both on account of the mischiefs it works in practice, and the injustice of the principle on which it is founded. Traced to its origin, the law of primogeniture is but the law of the stronger. The majority of those who accumulate wealth die before their younger children attain to man's estate; and in rude stages of society, before the promulgation of laws of inheritance, the natural consequence follows, that the older children possess themselves of the inheritance, to the exclusion of the younger. And so strongly is this unjust propensity rooted, that in the best regulated communities, where the law distributes estates equally, without regard to age or sex, yet in practice it is a matter of serious difficulty to effect a fair division between adult and minor children, or between heirs of different sexes, the stronger and craftier age and sex usually obtaining the advantage, in the very teeth of the law.



I cannot here enter into a more detailed examination of the practical working of the principles which I have described as always subsisting, and too often predominating in the English character; and I must content myself with saying, that through their influence society in England has become unnatural and artificial, to an extent never before exemplified in Europe. The seeming internal strength of the British social system is founded upon its own rottenness. It relies for its stability on a national bankruptcy, which makes it the interest of wealthy capitalists to uphold the credit of the government; a system of sinecures and pensions, which draws around the standard of the executive an army of placemen, hirelings, and hungry expectants; an oppressive corn law, which unites the opulent land holders in the support of a policy that transfers to their pockets the hard earnings of the poor; and lastly the adulterous union of church and state, and the princely power, wealth, pride and luxury of the prelacy,\* which arrays the whole moral force of the established church in the defence of the existing order of things with all its flagitious abuses. That a system so monstrous can long subsist by its own strength, it is preposterous to suppose; and even now the integrity of the British empire is maintained only by the support, direct or indirect, of foreign powers. The policy of England, which consists in making universal commerce tributary to her interests, is hostile to the peace and prosperity of the Christian

\*The revenues of the English bishops, with but four exceptions, exceed ten thousand dollars per annum. Two enjoy incomes little short of one hundred thousand dollars each, and ten receive more than the salary of the President of the United States. All the twenty seven English bishops are LORDS OF PARLIAMENT, excepting the incumbent of the diocese of Sodor and Man.

That the enormous revenues of the English Bishops are not expended in works of charity appears from examinations of the records of Doctors Commons in 1828, by which it was shown that the twenty four bishops, who died in the twenty years preceding 1828, left to their heirs in *personal property alone* above seven millions of dollars, or about three hundred thousand dollars each upon an average. A bishop of Clogher in Ireland, of the established church, amassed from his episcopal revenues, in eight years, no less than four hundred thousand pounds sterling; and the Bishop of Cloyne in the same unhappy kingdom, who died in 1820, left one hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

world, and either that policy must be modified by a domestic revolution, or, whenever a retaliatory system shall be generally adopted by other powers, or England forced to admit the principles of reciprocity in her intercourse with them, the smouldering fire that lurks in her vitals will burst forth, and *Troja fuit* will be inscribed on the ruins of her greatness.

If we are in a good degree exempt from the evils of the social system of England, it is because we have rejected the cardinal principles from which those evils flow; and it is both more just and more philosophical to ascribe the excellence of our institutions to the conformity of our principles with right reason, than to rest satisfied with referring our prosperity to our external circumstances, without inquiring upon what basis those institutions, by which national welfare is controlled, are built.

The defects of character most commonly imputed to New England are two. It is said that the love of gain is our ruling passion, and that we are destitute of the conservative principle, and the elevating influences, implied in the reverence for antiquity.

The love of gain is a blameable passion, only when the accumulation of wealth is aimed at, irrespectively of its uses; when money is made an end, not a means. But the uses, and of course the necessity, for money are greater to the American citizen than to the European; and the just and beneficial rule of the equal distribution of inheritances operates like an agrarian law, by dividing the wealth of the community once in a generation. Hence few, very few, begin life with a competence, and where there are none who are able to lead lives of literary or other elegant leisure, and all are devoted to some productive occupation, the community may, to a superficial observer, appear to be actuated mainly by the love of gain. But the charge, after all, amounts to little more than this, that the working bees outnumber the drones; and the notorious fact, that the estates of few deceased persons more than suffice to sustain the helpless and educate the young of the family, is a proof, that the vice of avarice is neither deeply rooted, nor generally diffused, among us.

But, as I have said, the uses of money are greater to the Amer-

ican citizen than to the European. The American, enjoying larger rights, is under more comprehensive responsibilities, and to the discharge of these a competence is, if not necessary, at least helpful. Every citizen is directly or indirectly charged with all the duties, the performance of which is required for the just working of our system; and every man of liberal views naturally and properly feels a desire to avail himself of all the means of advancement in life, which the institutions of his country make accessible to him. If he would qualify himself, by assiduous cultivation of the faculties, which God has given him, for usefulness or distinction in political life, if he aim at the acquisition of knowledge for its pleasures or its honours, if he aspire to the highest degree of intellectual culture, to gratify a refined taste by the contemplation and study of the miracles of art, to enrich his mind and liberalize his views by foreign travel, to aid in the diffusion of knowledge, or to contribute to the public and private charities of an eminently charitable age, he must, in general, first earn, by diligent and self-denying industry, the leisure and the pecuniary means, which all these various objects require.

False notions of economy, and narrow views of the powers and duties of government, make our rulers niggardly in providing for the citizen the means of intellectual improvement and progress. The means of primary instruction are but partially secured by public provision; and government takes no thought for the higher seminaries, which are after all the true sources, even of the rudiments of knowledge. For knowledge, in its origin and diffusion, is like the current of a river. It rises not in the dead level of a vast champaign, but it is condensed from the vapours of heaven, on the summit of the cloud-capped hills; and the higher the source, the wider will be the vale it fertilizes.

Our governments collect no libraries for public use, they fill no galleries with the productions of the pencil or the chisel, and primogeniture does not hand down the accumulated artistical or literary collections of opulent families, in an unbroken line, through successive generations. The American therefore, I repeat, who desires those advantages, which in many parts of Eu-

rope are freely accessible to the poorest and the humblest, must acquire them for himself; and money is to him the indispensable condition, not only of many social enjoyments, but of all the advantages required for the development of his higher intellectual faculties. He must purchase his own library, collect his own cabinet, and buy with the sweat of his own brow, the leisure which the profitable use of these facilities demands.

I deny therefore, that we are justly chargeable with an inordinate love of wealth, or with parsimony in its use; but I am obliged to admit, that in regard to the means of its acquisition, a radical error prevails both among our people, and in the policy of our government. I refer to the disposition to accumulate, not by increase, but by exchange; to transfer wealth, not to produce it. Trade is a conduit, not a source, and its principle is opposed to that of industry. The principle of industry is that of production, increase; that of trade, exchange, which adds nothing to the common stock, and can only increase the nominal value of articles of commerce by the expenses of importation. New countries must of necessity be commercial; and productive industry can hardly flourish, until a great extent of arable land is brought under cultivation, facilities of communication are perfected, and the physical resources of the territory developed; and little or no surplus of industrial products can be expected, until these preliminary labours be performed. The trading propensities of the New Englanders are the fruit of habits necessarily contracted during our colonial bondage, when productive industry was not only discouraged by the mother country, but scarcely capable in itself of furnishing employment for an active population.

The first economical effort of government ought to be to promote the greatest amount of production, regard being had to natural facilities, the proportion between labour employed and capital required, and the possible consumption of the product; the second, so to regulate trade, the handmaid of production, that it shall convey the surplus where it is most wanted, and where of course, other things being equal, it may be expected to yield

the best returns. This doctrine is fast becoming a part of the settled political creed of the North, and both government and people are now learning, that in a moral as well as in an economical point of view, traffic is truly profitable only where it is mutually advantageous to both buyer and seller.

The want of reverence for antiquity, which is charged upon us as a conspicuous defect, is in part the necessary consequence of that trait in our mental constitution, which impels us to neglect and overlook the outward form, and rest upon the indwelling principle. The notion of antiquity cannot attach to principle; for truth, being eternal, is ever young. Again, antiquity is but a comprehensive name for associations and traditions connected with localities, monuments, ruins or other ancient material objects. In this sense therefore, antiquity, and the reverence with which it is regarded, necessarily partake of a local character; and an emigrating people leaves behind it, with the localities, the associations and the traditions upon which that reverence is founded. This is quite observable in reference to the events of our own early history, the traditional memory of which survives only near the localities where they transpired.

For these two reasons therefore, neither the places, the monuments, nor the forms, which in the eye of the European are sacred, are regarded by the American with an equal degree of devout reverence. But there is still another reason for our comparative indifference to customs and objects, which, in the old world, are held in a degree of veneration little short of superstition. Antiquity is relative. It depends not upon mere lapse of years, and that which is ancient to an Englishman is but of yesterday to a Chinese. In the brief period of two centuries, society has with us passed through all its phases, from the most pristine simplicity to the most artificial refinement, and occasion has been offered for the display of every quality, that ennobles man in any stage or condition of earthly existence, and in every variety of external relations. In our own short national career, our country has produced as brilliant examples of genius, wisdom, and virtue, instances of as devoted patriotism, as heroic valour, as noble gen-



erosity, as exalted piety, as the whole history of the Eastern world can boast. We look not then to ancient Athens or to Sparta, or to the dark ages of England or of France, for models of the highest excellence of which our nature is capable; and our own soil has its evergreen spots consecrated by the blood of the patriot, and the grave of the martyr. The only antiquity with which the sons of the Pilgrims can truly sympathize begins with the emigration of the Puritans. It was then, that the Lord brought our fathers out of Egypt, relieved them both from the temptations of the flesh-pots, and the oppressions of the accursed Pharaoh and his idolatrous hierophants, and made them a peculiar people unto himself. Let us not then, as some incline, return to the worship of Apis, and set up the golden calf in the wilderness. He makes but a poor exchange, who barter the holy teachings, that parental instruction addressed to the heart, for the lessons of the stranger, that appeal but to the imagination; who abandons the humble simplicity of our venerable and eminently primitive Christian worship, for the pomp and splendour of more imposing rituals, or who seeks his models in the house of the alien, and patterns not after the wise and good of his native land, whom the Providence that appointed his birthplace has raised up to be his exemplars. Our early history, though modern in date, has all the claims to our veneration that human virtue or divine favour can bestow. The youngest father is old and reverend in the eyes of his child; and to the true American, the hoariest antiquity has no memories more venerable than the landing of the Pilgrims, no spot more sacred than the Plymouth Rock.

Such then are the traits which characterize the mind of the true New-Englander; such are the sources from which our institutions flow. Our social system contains within itself all the elements of national prosperity; our national character the elements most favourable to the growth of wisdom and of virtue.

But there are influences, both domestic and extraneous, which threaten the purity of our character, and the stability of those principles, the observance of which alone can preserve us in the

enjoyment of the prosperity and peace, that thus far have been our lot.

The most dangerous domestic influence is that of the large commercial towns. Most American cities have been founded for the purpose of trade, and of course upon an unfavourable moral basis. Your true citizen believes, that the chief end of man is to buy, sell, and get gain; and deeming that which is profitable to be expedient, he finds authority in the dishonest Paley, the oracle of English morality, for holding that which is expedient to be right. The legitimate object of government he conceives to be to foster and encourage trade, and the proposition, that the rights and interests of the three hundred thousand inhabitants of Vermont are equally entitled to protection with those of the three hundred thousand citizens of New-York, is to him a preposterous absurdity; for he finds that if tried by the scale of imports and exports, his only unerring criterion, not Vermont only, but New-England kicks the beam. The distinction between worth and exchangeable value he holds to be a metaphysical refinement, the revival of an exploded subtlety of a benighted age. His motto is: All things have their price; and the profoundest of philosophers is the commercial alchemist, who extracts a profit of ten per cent from a branch of business, which in the hands of other men yields but nine.

Another trait in the character of the citizen is that narrowness of mind, which grows out of confined habits of life. With him the civilized world is bounded by the limits of the paved district, and all that outer region, which is not illuminated by street-lamps, and guarded by the vigilance of city watchmen, is shrouded in Cimmerian darkness, and plunged in the rudest barbarism. The country he regards as a pleasure-ground for the recreation of the citizen, and a field for the supply of his table, sparsely inhabited by a race of drudges, whose vocation is to toil, that they may pay tribute to the lords of creation, the money-changers of Wall Street, and the chapmen of Pearl. The uniformity of city life, the narrowness of its range, and the comparative permanence and regularity of its forms, require for success in life a smaller

amount of intelligence, than is demanded to insure prosperity in the country. In spite therefore of the advantages, which the concentration of the means of improvement brings within the reach of every citizen, you are met, at every corner of the city, by a crassitude of ignorance, which nowhere exists in the interior ; and it is an unquestionable fact, that the average standard, not only of intelligence, but of true refinement of feeling and taste, as distinguished from polish of manner, and observance of purely conventional forms, is higher in any given class in the country, than in the corresponding circle in commercial towns.

Although the spirit of trade is unfavourable to the social system, because the relation between buyer and seller is to some extent a hostile one, yet the identity of interest, and the strength resulting from concentration, have enabled the large commercial towns to acquire a weight of influence in our national councils, and over the national mind, wholly disproportioned to the intelligence, the numbers, or even the wealth of their inhabitants. The cities, themselves swayed by corrupt and selfish principles, control that public opinion, which gives law to the land ; and the infection of their example has tended to strengthen the otherwise too strong disposition of the times to rely, for the accomplishment of all great objects, rather upon organized corporate, than individual, action. That the principle of associate action is one of great efficiency, and frequent necessity, in other matters besides the affairs of government, is not to be denied ; but it is liable to great abuses, because it tends to substitute the will or caprice of the majority for the conscience of the individual, and thus by a too frequent recourse to it, the sense of personal responsibility, and the individuality of character are impaired, and the sphere of conscious obligation narrowed. Men yield to their sect what they deny to their God ; they cease to recognize their allegiance to their country, and talk of their duty to the more visible and tangible organization of their party, or to some smaller clique of their personal followers and friends. Demagogue has come to signify not the leader, but the tool, of the multitude ; and politicians, serving where they should control, following where they

should guide, purchase power at the price of liberty, and that they may rule over others, scruple not to enslave themselves.

Again, the commercial towns are the inlet to that pestiferous influence, which is the principal, if not the only, extraneous source of real danger to our institutions and our principles. I speak not here of the lesser evils resulting from the propensity to ape the fashions and extravagances, and to adopt the forms and fripperies, of the social life of monarchical or aristocratic countries, but of the deeper mischiefs, which threaten to sap the foundations of our prosperity and our virtue, by undermining the principles of civil and religious polity on which they rest. Every foreign heresy or folly in religion and in government finds a congenial soil in that corrupted mass of outlandish renegades and adventurers, and denaturalized Americans, that composes so large a proportion of the population of our largest towns. Here they strike root, and hence they spread their fibres and ramifications, through the whole body of society. It is from England, that this poison mainly distils; and our community of origin, law and language, and our extensive commercial relations, and facility of intercourse with that country, expose us to the constant danger of an influence most hostile to the permanence and integrity of our social system. That influence is already great in most of our commercial towns, and in some of the largest unhappily paramount; but the mass of the people of New-England still regard with a wholesome jealousy the teachings and the policy of the land of our old oppressors. Our most valuable institutions, and most cherished privileges, are the fruit of a spirit, which has little in common with present English character. They contain within themselves a principle of life, and progressive development, the action of which can be promoted by no foreign stimulus; and the infusion of extraneous elements will cause a fermentation, which can only end in their own violent expulsion, or the corruption of the whole mass. The traits of character, which I have ascribed to our Puritan ancestors, and their necessary counterpart, the principles of civil and ecclesiastical polity which they finally adopted, are characteristic of our race, they belong

to our mental constitution, they are a part of our nature, and the son of the Pilgrims who discards them purchases his new light at the expense of a schism in his own inner man. But I have already given my views of the defects of the English mind at so great length, that I need not detain you by dwelling on the dangers to which an approximation to it would expose us. Let it suffice to say, that as a diversity of principles has emancipated us from the principal evils of the English plan of government in church and state, so an assimilation of our own character to that from which we have diverged, could not fail to bring upon us the burdens under which England now groans; and a new emigration to some yet barbarous and untrodden coast would be the only refuge for those descendants of the Pilgrims, who have remained faithful to the principles of their fathers.

I have now pointed out the leading excellencies of the character of New-England, and the sources whence they are derived, and briefly hinted at some of the dangers, which threaten to overthrow our outward prosperity, and to undermine the foundations on which it rests; and I have endeavored so to treat the subject, that the duties resulting from these views, should without formal specification, suggest themselves. The duty however which I wish specially to enforce is that of such a thorough and comprehensive study of our own history, and of that branch of the English family to which we belong, as shall lead to a just appreciation of the characters and principles of our forefathers, and of their intimate and inseparable connexion with those equal institutions, which are the pride and life of every true-hearted American. The knowledge, which such study alone can give, will be found to be the best and surest source of a devout and enduring love of country, as contradistinguished from that turbulent and demagogical counterfeit patriotism, which drew down the merited reproof of Johnson's well known harsh sarcasm. American history, instead of being postponed to that of Greece and Rome, of England or of France, ought to occupy a conspicuous place in the course of instruction in every seminary, from the primary to the professional school; and in regard to our knowl-



edge of all that pertains to our country, it were well to emulate the true Gothic spirit of that noble Dane, who resented as an indignity the inquiry whether he could speak German as fluently as Danish, and thanked God that he knew no language so well as his mother tongue.

The duty to which I refer is particularly incumbent on those, who, like the young gentlemen of the society which I have the honor to address, are devoting a few years of scholastic retirement to preparation for the higher duties of active life. Upon you it will devolve to expound from the pulpit, the chair, and the bench, the laws of God, of nature, and of man. You can neither comprehend nor apply the principles of your country's laws, without a knowledge of her history; and you can nowhere find happier illustrations of the practical influence of the unadulterated word of God, as expounded not by human tradition or authority, but by the reason and the heart, than in the lives of your Puritan ancestors.

I do not expect for New-England a high degree of pecuniary prosperity, or political influence. Our rude climate and comparatively rugged and barren soil must yield the palm to the softer skies of the South, and the luxuriant prairies of the West. The population of our mountains and our valleys will increase in a ratio far short of the rapid multiplication of the inhabitants of the newer states; and our proportional weight in the national legislature will diminish with every census. But the mighty West will look back with filial reverence to the birth-place of the fathers of her people, and the schools of New-England will still be nursing mothers to the posterity of her widely scattered children. If then we cannot be the legislators of our common country, let it be your care that we become not unworthy to be its teachers, and though we cannot give it law, let us not cease to give it light.

ERRATA. Page 17, line 5 after 'people,' insert 'and holds

" " " 6 " 'the' " 'public'

" 23 " 36 " 'and' " 'the'

" 27 " 22 read 'legislatures'

" 29 " 17 " 'array'

" 34 " 9 for 'relieved' read 'delivered'

" 37 " 24 after 'with' insert 'the'

Also, " 4 " 24, in some copies, read 'here'

" 21 " 6 " " " " 'mistake'









